



Mobility Enhancing Ration Components (MERCs)

Overview:

The Army is developing the **Mobility Enhancing Ration Components (MERCs)**, which will provide increased flexibility and tailorability to fit a variety of mobilization requirements on short notice. This addresses the need for a scenario-driven operational ration component system that supports highly mobile and forward deployed troops and is suitable for arctic, jungle, desert, mountain, and urban areas under all climatic conditions. This system will take advantage of major advancements in food preservation and stabilization technology to increase acceptance, soldier mobility and consumption and to simplify shipping, distribution and handling.

Description:

The MERCs have the following characteristics:

- Enhance mobility of the individual soldier
- Provide components that are ready-to-eat, requiring no heating
- Provide high quality, familiar foods
- Retain ration quality upon storage

MERCs are shelf-stable, eat-out-of-hand/eat-on-the-move components that have application to the full range of fielded individual rations to include the Meal, Ready-to-Eat, assault rations, special purpose rations, etc. Several varieties of shelf-stable sandwiches have been developed and represent a breakthrough in the state-of-the-art technology in intermediate moisture foods. Commercial producibility of selected items was successfully demonstrated and field tested. The sandwich concept can be expanded into a highly desirable family of convenient foods that are familiar to the soldier in appearance and taste. Major advancements in food processing, preservation and packaging technology will be exploited to enhance operational rations. The MERC technology has been transformed to industry and will be integrated into field operational rations. The MERCs have been transitioned to Field Group/ Individual Ration Improvement Programs.

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